

Of Confirmation. (14)

SERMON

Preach'd at

Saint Benedict Grace-Church,

May 14th. 1693.

when the

Right Reverend Father in G O D,

H E N R Y

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N,

Confirmed there.

H E B. VI. part of the Second Verse.

And of laying on of Hands.

By **P H I L I P S T U B S**, A. M. Fellow of
Wadham-College Oxon.

And Chaplain to the Right Reverend Father in God,
ROBERT Lord Bishop of **CHICHESTER.**

Publish'd at the Request of the P A R I S H I O N E R S.

L O N D O N:

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For the Benefit of the Poor. 1708.

To the much Esteemed, his very good Friends, the
Inhabitants of the United Parishes, St. Benedick Gracc-
Church, and St. Leonard East-Cheap.

Gentlemen,

THE Importance of Friends, is generally supposed to be but a
feign'd Apology of some conceited Writers, for the Publication of
their darling Conceptions; and where its more than a mere pre-
tence, I must confess my self of the Opinion, That 'tis one of the weakest
Motives, for a Man's exposing of himself, that can be: By satisfying
openly the repeated Requests of both Parishes for the Printing this Sermon
of Confirmation, (it must be own'd) I clear my self sufficiently from the
former Imputation; But how I shall get rid of the other Charge I know
not, Tho' I should declare, That you back'd your Requests with an Inti-
mation, that ye thought it not only a Seasonable Discourse, but a very ser-
viceable one too: For, however, the First part of the Character may be
applicable enough to it, with respect to the Time when, and occasion on
which 'twas Preach'd, I cannot be so fond of this mean, hasty Perfor-
mance, as to think the rest of the World will be so charitable, as ye have
been, in admitting of the latter: But, whatever success it may have a-
broad, I am glad it had its intended effect at home; which was, To make
you still more enamour'd with, and benefited by one of the Pious Constitu-
tants of our Establish'd Church; for which in General (I cannot without
the highest Ingratitude, omit this Opportunity of Publishing it) ye have
many of you a profound Veneration. Thus God Almighty would confirm
you all every Day more and more in this just Esteem for her Principles
and Practices, i. e. That he would daily strengthen you all in the Faith
profess'd by her once deliver'd to the Saints, and that ye may have such a
right Judgment to follow her respective Injunctions, as may settle in every
one of your Breasts a firm Peace here, and procure for you everlasting
Happiness hereafter, is the hearty desire, and shall be (whilst amongst
you) the continued Endeavour of him, who professes himself with the
greatest Sincerity,



Yours Obedient,

Humble Servant

In the Lord,

PHIL STUBBS

Heb. vi. *part of the Second Verse.*

And of laying on of hands.

The Context runs thus,

Verf. 1. *Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God.*

Verf. 2. *Of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on of Hands, and of Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.*

THE Words are in Prosecution of a Digression, begun by the Author of this Epistle, at the 11th. Verse of the foregoing Chapter: Where, in the middle of a Discourse concerning the Authority and Dignity of our *Saviour's Priesthood* beyond that of *Aaron's*, he takes Occasion to reprimand the Negligence and Improficiency of some new Converts, in the *Sublimier Mysteries* of the Gospel; telling them, that he had *many things* more to say about those Matters (which he afterwards resumes again accordingly at the Beginning of the 7th. Chapter) but they were such, as were now *hard to be uttered* clearly enough, because they were *dull of hearing*: For, saith he, as he goes on blaming them, *when for the Time*, that considerable Time, that ye have professed Christianity, ye ought to be Teachers of others, ye have need some of you, *That one teach you again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God: and are become such as have need of Milk and not of strong Meat*, That is, they were yet such *Babes in Christ*, as he expresses himself in the next Verse, That they were hardly past their *Catechism*, as we say, That little Book which teaches young Beginners the first Rudiments of Religion: Such an one, as is supposed to be hinted at in the Context, which did contain, amongst others, the respective Doctrines there reckon'd up; But now, that he might fully wean them from this Childish Diet, and by stronger Nourishment rear them up unto *perfect Men, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*; he doth in the Words before us, like a wise Master in the School of the Blessed Jesus, *catch them by Guile* (that I may use his own Phrase in another Place) smoothing them up as it were, and yet tacitly upbraiding them for their past Miscarriage in this

Particular : *Therefore*, (as if he had said, If we mean not always to be Children) *leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, for *hence, Let us go on unto Perfection : Not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, &c.*

From which Reproof of our Apostle, what Doctrine for our Instruction might be rais'd at this time, is very obvious; *viz.* That the Backwardness or Non-proficiency of these new Converts in Religious Matters, under the ablest Teacher then in the World, was unconceivably great : For that St. Paul was so, after our Saviour's Ascension, must be allowed by all ; in that, He alone of all the Apostles was a Scholar before he was a Christian ; and so learn'd without Inspiration, That upon that single Account he might with Modesty enough have said, *He was not a whit behind the very Chiefest Apostles*, 2 Cor. 11. 5. had not he, as he himself tells the *Galatians*, *profited in the Jews Religion above his Equals*, Gal. 1. 12, 14. and receiv'd the Knowledge of our Saviour, as he did, *not from Men, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

We might, I say, raise a good Head of Discourse for our present Instruction, from this general Reproof of our Apostle, about the Backwardness or Non-proficiency of the Primitive Christians in Religious Concerns, under the ablest Teacher in the World ; did not the Business of this Day, and the Ignorance of too many even amongst our selves, determine our Meditations to that Part of the Context, where mention is made, of *laying on of Hands* ; By which Words what is to be understood, and what is contained in them, I shall endeavour to shew (with all the Brevity and Clearness I can) as a proper preliminary Subject, to the solemn Celebration of that pious, Primitive Institution of *Confirmation*, to be perform'd here this Afternoon, by the Right Reverend Father in God the Lord Bishop of this Diocess.

Now for the better, and more full Explication of the Text, Be pleas'd to take notice, That *Laying on of Hands*, or *Imposition of Hands*, as 'tis more Scholastically term'd, *Is a Sacred Rite, whereby some Holy Person, that prays for, or blesses another, particularly points out the Person so pray'd for or bless'd as one, on whom Grace or other Special Benefit is to be conferr'd* : Which accordingly we find made use of either in the Old or New Testament, in the Four following Instances,

1. In simple *Benediction* or *Blessing* of Persons ; Thus, in the Old Testament, the Patriarch *Jacob* in blessing the Sons of *Joseph*, *laid his Hands upon their Heads*, Gen. 48. 14, 15. And in the New, our Saviour is said, *To take the little Children up in his Arms, to lay his Hands upon them, and bless them*, Mark 10. 16.

2. In *Designation* of Persons to some Holy Function, or *Ordination* of *Priests* or *Ministers* ; Thus we read, Numb. 27. 18. under the Levitical Dispensation, *The Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the Son of Nun, and lay thine Hand upon him*, as a Consequent of which we are told, Deut. 34. 9. That, *Joshua the Son of Nun was full of the Spirit of Wisdom, for Moses had laid his Hands upon him*. Conformable whereunto we have

the like Practise registred under the Gospel-Œconomy, *Acts 13. 3. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their Hands upon them, they sent them away*, meaning Barnabas and Saul, to whom God had thereby imparted Gifts proper for the Work whereunto he had called them, *Acts 13. 2. which like Gift St. Paul puts Timothy in Mind of, when he charges him thus, 1 Tim. 4. 14. Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.*

3. This Rite was made use of by our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, in Curing Diseases and Healing the Sick. So we find, *Mark 6. 5. That he (our Saviour) could do no mighty Work in his own Country, save that he laid his Hands upon a few sick folk and healed them.* Nay, This is one of those very signs promised to those that should believe in the Name of Christ, *Mark 16. 18. They shall lay Hands on the sick, and they shall recover*: Accordingly, St. Paul cur'd Publius's Father of a Fever, *Acts 28. 8.*

Lastly, This Rite was made use of in Scripture, by the Apostles, at Confirmation, or Prayer with Imposition of Hands, for the Establishment and strengthening such in the Faith, as had been already Baptized; which Institution of theirs God was pleased so far to approve of, saith a Reverend Author, * That he did actually give wonderful Measures of the Spirit, to those on whom they laid their Hands; thereby honouring the Governours of his Church, and engaging all the Members thereof to be subject to them, and to be at Peace one with another. This appears from that famous Instance, *Acts 8. 14, 15, 16, 17.* where, when the Samaritans had been converted and baptized by Philip the Deacon, they did not receive the Holy Ghost, until St. Peter and St. John had confirm'd them, ‡ from whence the Fathers generally deduce this Practice. But that this was generally constituted among the Apostles is evident, because St. Paul meeting with some Baptized Persons at Ephesus, did in like manner lay his Hands upon them, and confirm them, *Acts 19. 6.* of which he reminds them, *Eph. 1. 13. In whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise.* And so we may justly believe he did in other Churches, whereupon he saith to those of Corinth, *2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. He which confirmeth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, &c.*

Now, whether by the Doctrine of Laying on of Hands in the Text, is meant all the Four Sorts just mentioned, or that of Confirmation only, is not very material: For though some Commentators will have these

* See Dr. Comber's brief Discourse upon the Office of Confirmation.

‡ Id quod ageretur a Petro & Johanne factum est, ut Orations pro eis habita, & manu imposita, invocaretur & infunderetur super eos spiritus sanctus. Cyp. Ep. ad Iubarian.

† Ο δε θεος ος ος, &c. η χειρας ημας ος. ο η σφραγισα μεν ημας.

Words speak of all of them, because the Apostle just before mentioned the Doctrine of *Baptism*, which they say includes the several Species of it, viz. That of the *Jews*, of *John the Baptist*, and our *Saviour's*; That of *Blood*, *Matth. 20. 23*. That of *Fire*, *Matth. 3. 11*. That of *Water* externally, as well as the Internal one of the Holy Ghost, *1 Pet. 3. 21*. And others more probably, will have them design *Confirmation* singly, because he is here reckoning up the Fundamentals of Religion, amongst which *Imposition of Hands in absolving Penitents* (another Apostolical Usage of this Ceremony, tho' not of express Scripture Foundation) cannot be number'd, because taken in, in the Word *Repentance* before; nor that of *Ordination*, because 'tis one of those *Mysteries* of Perfection to which *St. Paul* goes on *Chap. 7*; nor either of the other two, upon very obvious Accounts: We may hence learn however, That *Confirmation* is generally thought to be grounded here; for which I might urge to you many Ancient Authorities: But because I would not seem ostentatious, and *Modern Writers* are more Authentick with some Men than the *Primitive Fathers*, let me just tell you that most of the old Reformed Divines of Note, such as *Bezæ*, *Ilyricus*, *Chemnitzius*, *Zanchius* and others are of this Opinion: particularly *Calvin** (who shall stand for all) is express upon the Place, *Hic unus locus abundè testatur hujus Ceremoniæ originem fluxisse ab Apostolis, &c.* This one Place, saith he, evidently shews that *Confirmation* was instituted by the Apostles.

Having thus explain'd to you at large the meaning of my Text, and shewn, that by the Doctrine of *laying on of Hands* is meant *Confirmation*, the Business of this Day, I shall now dismiss the Words, and speak to the thing it self, what may be suitable to the present Occasion; And that I may omit nothing pertinent, I shall prosecute my Discourse in the following Method.

1. I shall endeavour to shew, That *Confirmation* was not to be a temporary Rite in the Church only for the Apostles times, as some would have it) because of the visibly different effects it had then, from what it has now, but perpetual for after Ages.

2. I shall consider with whom the Power of *Confirming* is now lodg'd, and shew, according to the Practice of the Church of England, that it ought to be executed by the Bishop alone.

3. I shall offer to you what are, or may be the Benefits of such our *Confirmation*; and,

Lastly, The Qualifications and Duty of such as intend to be, or are already *Confirmed*.

And First then, That *Confirmation* was not to be a mere temporary Rite, calculated only for the Exigencies of the Apostolical Times, but a perpetual Usage for the Benefit of all succeeding Ages, I might plainly prove from the combined Testimony of all the Fathers † almost, not a few

* V. Calvin *sup. cap. 6. ad Heb. comm. 2.*

† Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Cyril, Gregory

Councils, and the constant Practice of the Eastern and Western Churches, from the hearty Desires for its Restauration of the most eminent Reformers, such were *Calvin*, *Bullinger*, and others above cited, together with the Obedience therunto of the *Bohemian* and *Lutheran Churches*, as unto an *Apostolical Practice*; from the Earnest Suffrages after, and endeavours for the resettling of it here in *England*, by some of the ablest *Presbyterian Ministers*; Who, towards the close of the late *Times of Confusion*, when their Zeal for what they call'd *Reformation* began to abate, (seeing some amongst them under that fullsome pretence had Reform'd all Religion almost out of Doors) and they began to contrive the retrieving such Sacred Institutions, which should contribute to the Advancement of Purity and Concord in the Churches of these Kingdoms, Thought upon *Confirmation*, which is very remarkable, as one that deserv'd their utmost, and call'd for their earliest Application; accordingly upon occasion of one *Hammer's Book*, that was printed on that Subject in the Year 1658, Mr. *Joseph Caryl* in his Approbation of it, tells the World, That *Confirmation* or *Imposition of Hands with Prayer*, for the compleating of Church-Member-ship, (which is what Mr. *Hammer* pleads for, and is one main Deliga of Confirmation amongst us) *Would be Perfective of the much desired and longed for Restauration of the Churches to their Primitive Purity.* Mr. *John Howe* saith the same great things of it, though in other Words, That *'twas the only expedient to extricate the Church out of those many perplexing Difficulties, through which 'twas driving forwards towards a Reformation*; Mr. *Hughes* of *Plymouth* (a) Styles it there, a *Rational and Christian Institution*; Mr. *Richard Baxter* approves of it in his *Saint's Rest*, Book of *Infant Baptism*, and another of *Right to Sacraments*, but here more particularly, (besides many Eulogies given to it) concludes that it (b) *ought to be entertain'd with universal Activity upon several Accounts.* 1. *Because it is so commonly received by Protestants.* 2. *Because it is excellently suited to the joint promoting of Holiness and Unity*; and so on. Lastly, to name no more (though I might urge to you the *New-England People*, who allow of it, as is plain from Mr. *Cotton's Way of the Churches there*, Chap. 2. § 2.) (c) Mr. *Ralph Venning* in his Commendation of it, after he says, *That he doth not see how it can be neglected without a very great Prejudice to Church Communion*; adds, *But haply, some may be so nice, as to be offended with the*

Nazianzen, Sr. Austin, &c. The Council of Elvira, that of Laodicea, &c. Pag. 6.

* V. Chemnitii, Exam. Conc. Tridentini Part. 2. Pag. 259.

† *TELEŴOIS, or an Exercitation upon Confirmation, by Jonathan Hammer Minister of the Gospel.* 8vo.

‡ See his Imprimatur before the Title-Page.

§ See his Letter in the Preface.

(a) To the Reader. (b) To the Christian Reader.

(c) To the Berzan Readers.

Name, and dislike Confirmation for fear of Bishoping, as if that old fashion'd Garment had but a piece of new raiment clasp'd out to it, and dress'd up in another mode: to which immediately joins this sarcastical Query, If it were so, can ye good come out of Nazareth? Bonum odor veritatis ex re qualibet. Intimating thereby very ingenuously, as I conceive, That Confirmation as 'twas practis'd in the Church of England by Bishops (before they were unjustly thrown out) was a wholesome Institution, and therefore not to be rejected; since Truth must be readily embrac'd wherever tis met with; which is no small Encomium, considering (especially) it came from a known Adversary to us.

This might we have the concurrent Sense and Practice of the Catholic Church for the Perpetuity of Confirmation, of Modern Divines, as well as Antient; Protestants, as well as Papists; Calvinists as well as Lutherans; Nonconformists as well as Church of England Men; But the Modesty of some Persons is so great, that a Cloud of Witnesses for any Doctrine that thwarts their present Inclinations, shall appear to them but as one of Smoak that soon vanishes away; Nay, rather than be convinced, or acknowledge themselves to be in an Errour, their own Private shallow Judgment shall sway with them more, than the united sober Opinions even of the Heads of their own Party. How shall we believe, say these Men, That Confirmation was to be a perpetual Rite; or say, as you Church-Men do, That your *† Imposition of Hands* is *after the Example of the Apostles*? When 'tis so far from it, That the effects then consequent thereupon are now wholly ceas'd: We read indeed, in the Eighth and Nineteenth Chapters of the *Acts* of the Holy Apostles, that when Confirmations were held by St. Peter and St. John at Samaria, and St. Paul at Ephesus, The Holy Ghost visibly and miraculously set a Seal to this Ordinance, by bestowing on the Persons confirm'd extraordinary Gifts, such were that of Prophecy, speaking with tongues, and the like, necessary for those Times; upon which Account they might well say, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*: But where is that bold Prelate amongst you, that dares pretend to any such Power now?

Nor do any of our Bishops make use of that Form in Confirmation, but only pray, * *That God would defend that Child, or Servant of his, on whom they lay their Hands, with his Heavenly strengthening Grace, &c.* Whole Prayers, together with those of a great many devout People assembled at such times, we cannot doubt, but are effectual for the obtaining that Blessing, for all such who are qualified to receive it, and are not Contumacious or Despisers of the Church of God. 1 Cor. 11. 16, 22.

And that no more than this, viz. The obtaining the inward Grace of God's Holy Spirit for some that were confirmed, was designed by the Apostles themselves in their Confirmations, I think may be fairly gather'd

† See in the proper Collect, in the Office of Confirmation, Upon whom (after the Example of the Apostles) we have laid our hands, &c.

* See the Benediction in the Office of Confirmation.

from that very Place, alledg'd to the contrary, out of the Eighth Chapter of the *Acts*: For as our Right Reverend *Bishop* hath observed, where this Power is mentioned, * There is no Exception of Age, Sex, or Profession; but all indifferently that had been baptized, received the Holy Ghost by Imposition of Hands. As it is said, *Acts* 10. 47. when St. Peter preach'd at Cornelius's House, the Holy Ghost fell upon all that were to be baptiz'd, as a Token of their being fit for it, Verse 48. Which if so,

If the Case be thus, that the Holy Ghost fell on all indifferently, and that all could not Prophesie, all had not the Gift of Healing or of Tongues, nay, that all had not a Share of any outward Gift; then certainly they, whom God separated not to any Office of the Church by some outward Gift, for the Conversion or Edification of others, had only some outward shew pass'd upon them for the greater Evidence of the inward Gifts of the Spirit of Grace, *Gratia gratum facientis*.

This, in short then, I take to be the Sence of our Church in this Matter; That the Holy Ghost is given us in this Ordinance, not to make us able to Prophesie, to speak with Tongues, or the like, But to know the Word, and to do the Will of God as well as we can. To which Purpose, that I may conclude this Head, hear what St. *Austin* said long ago against the *Donatists*; † *Neque enim temporalibus & sensibilibus miraculis per Manus Impositionem, &c. The Spirit which is now given by Imposition of Hands, is not attested by temporal and sensible Miracles, as it was at first, for the Commendation of our Faith while 'twas young, and to enlarge the Beginnings of the Church: For who expects now, That those on whom Hands are laid, for receiving the Holy Ghost, should presently begin to speak with Tongues: But yet, the Divine Love is understood to be secretly and invisibly inspired into their Hearts, by the Band of Peace, which enables them to say, The Love of God is spread abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given us. The Consequence of which will be, That we ought not any of us to despise Confirmation, because 'tis not attended with miraculous Gifts, which have ceased above 1200 Years ago; since though it imparts no Gifts to us now, yet it may be the means of communicating such Graces, as may enable us to perform our Duty, and practise it to the obtaining of Eternal Life, which is far better.*

As for those therefore, who would have Confirmation now wholly laid aside, as not according to the Example of the Apostles, because in the Infancy of the Church, the Holy Ghost was in some Cases miraculously bestowed by such Imposition of Hands, which ought not for good Reasons to be expected now; ‡ They may as well, 'tis thought, assert that the Imposition of Hands for Ordination, is not continued in the Church from the Example of the Apostles, because then the Holy Ghost was sometimes ex-

* In his 3d. Letter to his Clergy, 1682. on Confirmation.

† De Bapt. contra Donatist. lib. 3. cap. 16.

‡ See Falkner's *Libertas Ecclesiastica* Book II. Chap. 4. §. 3.

extraordinarily given thereby; or that our *Praying* and *Preaching* is not a doing that, for which we have the *Apostles* for an Example, because we cannot, by them expect, we do not any where find, amongst those that pretend chiefly to the Spirit, such wonderful Gifts, as sometimes were conferred under the *Apostles* Doctrine, and by their Prayer. But,

2dly, If the Rite of *Imposition of Hands* in Confirmation is to be peculiar: Our next Enquiry must be, where, or with whom the Power of thus *Laying on the Hands* is lodg'd. The *Presbyterians* all say, With the *Priest*; We of the Church of England unanimously, With the *Bishops*; and that for this Reason amongst others, Because the Dignity of their Office chiefly gives Authority to *bless* (according to that Rule of the *Apostle*, without all contradiction, *The Least is blessed of the Greater*, Heb. 7.) Which Reason, as it was back'd by that early notable Example, of St. *Peter's* and St. *John's* Mission from *Jerusalem* to *Samaritan*, to confirm those whom St. *Philip* had baptiz'd, but could not confirm, made this Custom so prevail in the Church, That, we are told, there cannot be produc'd any authentick Testimony out of Ecclesiastical History, * where a mere *Presbyter* presumed to exercise the Office of confirming, which was ever in the Primitive Church reserved to the *Bishop* alone. This I might largely prove out of Antiquity, particularly that known Place of St. *Cyprian*, † *Qui in Ecclesia Baptizantur, Præpositis Ecclesiæ officiantur*, &c. Those that are Baptiz'd in the Church, are presented to the *Bishops* to be confirmed. *Ut per nostram orationem ac manus Impositionem Spiritum sanctum consequantur*, That by our Prayers and Imposition of Hands they may receive the Holy Ghost. But I must hasten to my Third Head, remarking this by the Way, That whether the Power of Confirmation be lodg'd with *Bishop* or *Priest*, we of this Church are certainly in the right, which our Dissenting Brethren may not be: For, if those only can Confirm, who are called to the Office of a *Bishop*, as the Primitive Writers generally affirm conformable to the Practice of the Catholic Church, we have such *Bishops* amongst us, whilst they confessedly have not; If *Priests* may do it, our *Bishops* are, by the Confession of them all, Lawful *Priests* in the Church of God: So that the Case stands thus betwixt us, If *Priests* may confirm, we have such as well they, by their own Concession; If *Bishops* only (as most but themselves hold) we have them, whilst they have not.

But now in pleading for Confirmation by *Bishops* only, I would not be thought (as some slanderously insinuate we of the Church do endeavour) to make it a Sacrament, nay set it above either of the Sacraments instituted by our Blessed Saviour; because we allow a *Deacon* to officiate in the Lord's Supper, and a *Priest* to Baptize, but only a *Bishop* forsooth can confirm: No, in this we only follow the Institution and Practice of the Catholic Church, which reserv'd Solemn Benedictions as Acts of Pa-

* L'Estrange his Alliance of Divine Offices, chap. 9. p. 258.

† Cyp. Ep. ad Jabaianum de Bapt. Hæreticis.

ternal Authority to the *Bishops* alone, but are so far from holding Confirmation a Sacrament, That we expressly say, † *Those Five commonly called Sacraments in the Church of Rome, viz. Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Extream Unction and Marrimony, are not such, for that they have not any outward visible sign or Ceremony (ordained of God) as Tokens of inward an spiritual Grace thereby conferred. And the Papists must suffer us to beg their Pardon, if we reject the Mucy, Xeloma, or anointing Oyl made use of by them in Confirmation as an outward visible Sign, &c. (which yet we confess was anciently used in Baptism and in Confirmation too as a Ceremony only) together with the Box on the Ear which the Bishop gives the confirmed Party, the Binding of the Forehead for Seven Days after, and Abundance other Legerdemain Tricks foolishly and superstitiously brought into this Religious Performance by them, till we have as express Warrant from Scripture or Reason for them, as we have for Imposition of Hands, which they have irreverently, I may say, sacrilegiously thrown out of this Office, but we have restored, since the Reformation, to its Primitive Usage.*

Nor do we allow this Imposition of Hands, to be a sacramental Sign of pardoning and satisfying Grace, as Water, Bread and Wine, are in the Sacraments properly so called, and which are Means of conveying that Grace unto us; But we look upon that Ceremony here used, only ‡ as an immediate Representation of a Benediction; and of being thereby received into a higher Degree of Christians, by the Ministerial Power of the Church; and though further Grace from God is needful in this higher Degree, and humble and devout Persons may receive Grace from God suitable to whatsoever State he calleth them, yet Grace is in these Cases to be expected in the Use of Prayer, and from the Promises of God's Assistance to, and Presence with his Ministry, and People, not immediately by the use of Imposition of Hands; The Benefits consequent upon which, as it is joyned with the Prayers of the Bishop, and other Holy Christians, I come next to consider, as my Third Head.

3. Now the Benefits received by Imposition of Hands in Confirmation, with the Bishops and the Church's Prayers, are very great and many. But I shall crowd them for the present, into the three following. The First, with Respect to the Confirmed Persons, as herein immediately concern'd; the other Two, with Relation to the Established National Church of Christ, as it at present stands circumstantiated in England.

First, As to the Persons immediately concern'd; The Benefit they receive by Confirmation, if duly qualified, is the Infusion of that Heavenly Grace into their Hearts, mention'd in the Bishop's Benediction, and specified in the * First Prayer, as we are assured out of the Office of Confirmation as long ago at St. Ambrose's Time, to be the Spirit of Wisdom

† *Art. 25th. of the Church of England.*

‡ *V. Falknere Libert. Ecclesiast. lib. 6. cap. ubi supra §. 14.*

* *See Dr. Comber, pag. 223.*

and of *Understanding*; of *Wisdom*, i. e. in spiritual Matters; and of *Understanding*, i. e. of apprehending what we are taught; The *Spirit of Counsel* and of *Ghostly Strength*; of *Counsel*, i. e. of prudent managing all our Actions; and of *Ghostly Strength*, i. e. of executing all our Religious Purposes; the *Spirit of Knowledge*, and of *True Godliness*; of *Knowledge*, i. e. of discerning between Good and Evil; and of *True Godliness*, i. e. of Devotion in God's Service; *Lastly*, The *Spirit of Fear*, i. e. of Reverence towards God in all our Actions: And what an inestimable Advantage is this, if we reap this great Blessing from *Confirmation*, as I question not, but every pious Christian doth, who is sincere in his intentions and Endeavours? If we are from henceforward

Id. ibid. wise and apprehensive, prudent and courageous; discreet in our choice; devout in our Duties; and pious in our Lives; what Grores will there be wanting? Which of them will not spring from this Root? We shall then be endued with Charity, and the Love of God: Humility and Watchfulness; Faith and Holiness; Meekness and Patience; Temperance and Chastity; every thing that may make us good Christians, good Communicants; Whence a Second Benefit of *Confirmation* arises to the *National Church of Christ* here established amongst us.

2. 'Tis a known inveterate Prejudice sown in the Minds of most *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, and others among us, That we admit to the *Holy Sacrament*, all sorts of Commers, good or bad, godly or profane, without any Care, or the least Distinction: To which (though I might answer, that their own *Commissions*, however they may pretend them to be made up of the only Saints here on Earth, are but *minis* ones, (as is too evident from the scandalous Lives of many of their most zealous Professors as well as ours) and that whatever is amiss amongst us of that Nature, might have been cured long since by that *Discipline*, with d for every Year in the *Asb-Wednesday* Service, did not they industriously hinder its Restauration, by bug-bearing People into strange Notions of *Popishness*, *Prelaticalness*, and I know not what *Mischievousness* besides: I say, though I might reply thus to them, yet we may hence all of us afford them a more convincing Argument to the contrary, and at the same time demonstrate the great Advantages of *Confirmation*, which we have but they have not yet received amongst them, though † confessedly of so very great Use. That is, let us every one of us, who shall be or are already *confirmed*, but approach to the *Holy Sacrament* ‡ (and no Body ought to come near it before *Confirmation*, as ours with the *Primitive Church* expresses its Unwillingness in the last *Rubrick* of the Office for it) with devoted Affections, and live to better Purpose after *Con-*

* Preface to the Communion.

† See above pag. 6. 7.

‡ And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed. &c. Rubr. 3d. in the Office of Confirmation.

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tion than before we did, and we cannot fail of doing a great deal of Honour to God Almighty, by thus vindicating our Church's Constitution, and doubly stopping the Mouths of these Gain-sayers; as effectually we do,

3. Those of the *Anabaptists*: * The chiefest of whose Objections against our *Infant-Baptism*, is, That it doth not lay so strict an Obligation upon Men, as that of *Adult* Persons doth: But see, how the Force of that is taken away by the right Use of *Confirmation* amongst us; For, do they call for a *Personal* covenanting with *Christ* in Believers? Here we have it, † every confirm'd Person taking upon him, or her self those Vows which were made for them in Baptism by Proxy; Do they require *Publick Solemnity* in this Matter, for a firmer Engagement of Men to their Duty? Our *Confirmation* answers this their Expectation to a Title: For we ever renew our Baptismal Vow, in the Church, the most Publick Place set apart for God's Publick Worship, before the *Bishop* and others, God's publick *Ministers*, and a full Congregation frequently. Is there any thing else, that can engage Persons more rigidly to the Performance of this *Covenant*, which the *Anabaptists* don't require? Can a particular Witness, that may frequently stir us up to Remembrance of our Solemn Promise made to God before his People, be desired for this end? That nothing may be wanting to render People as much Christians as can be, Our Church enjoins, † *That every one shall have a God-father or God-mother, as a Witness of their Confirmation.* Which Order, were it not neglected as I fear it is too much, would make our Provision more effectual for the promoting of Christianity, and less exceptionable, than the Rebaptization of these our Adversaries. But now,

Fourthly and Lastly, That these Three Benefits of *Confirmation* may truly redound to ours and the Church's Good, The Person immediately concern'd, must be of a *competent Age*, (a) Which is the first Qualification, ought to be required of Persons that do desire to be confirm'd.

'Twas the Practice of the Church of *Rome* at first, to confirm Children presently after *Baptism*; not many Years ago here in *England* they did it not till they were Five Years of Age; (b) and in a late Council, younger than than of *Trent*, (since the Printing of our *Common-Prayer Book*) they have prohibited the Administration of it to all under Seven at least.

I am glad, I confess, to see a Church that boasts so much of her *An-*

* V. Humfredi Ep. Sarisburiensis Diat. Prelimin. ad Hammondi Com. de Confirmat. §. 12.

† See the Bishop's Interrogation in the Confirmation Office.

† Rubr. 4th. in the Church Catechism.

(a) Rub. 3d. in the Catechism.

(b) *Minori septennio Confirmationis Sacramentum nemini prabentur, Conc. Mediol. l. Cap. Qua pertinent ad Sacramenti Confirmat. administrationem.*

stiquity, doth not think her self yet *too old* to learn: But she has not reached the Prudence of our Constitution for all that: There being some (c) at Seven, nay at Twelve (which is thought early enough by some) what through difference of Education, want of natural Parts, and other the like Impediments, are as incapable of answering the End and Design of Confirmation, as others are at Five: Our Church therefore by requiring, that Persons to be confirm'd, should be of a *competent Age*, leaves it to the Care of Ministers, Parents, God-fathers, Masters, or other Trustees, That they recommend none to the Bishop, but such as are of Years of Discretion enough (be they older or younger) to make a Renunciation of the Devil, the Poms and Vanities of the World, with all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; and can give a tolerable account of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Sacraments. Those therefore, who bring or send any to Confirmation who can only say their Catechism by Rote, and are not duly qualified, as has been said; though they mean well in the main, I don't doubt, yet they must be look'd upon as such, who grossly abuse their Charge, and expose this Holy Institution to the just Scoffs of the Enemy, who will be sure to brand it, upon this Account, as a ridiculous, useless Ceremony.

2dly, As Persons desirous of Confirmation, must be of a *competent Age*, so be they never so old, they should not be confirmed twice; 'Tis a pious Error, I verily believe, in a great many, who thinking they can't have the Blessing of a Holy Man too often, follow the Bishop almost wheresoever he goes. But such are to be acquainted, since 'tis hardly possible to avoid the Impracticableness of its Reiteration in populous Cities, that there is no more need of a Second Confirmation than there is of a Second Baptism.

3dly, The last Qualification of Persons to be confirmed is, That they come with Devotion and Reverence, not for Fashion's Sake or Company's Sake only, as I fear, is the Case of too many. They who come to Confirmation, should be as much in earnest, as if they were going to the Holy Sacrament, or were even upon their Death-Beds: (d) For when they answer all, I do, to the Bishop's Question, who asks them, Whether they will now release their God-fathers and God-mothers from the Vows they took in their Names, and take it now in Person,

They solemnly promise the utmost Diligence and endeavour in their Christian Warfare; the Breach of which he will most grievously punish in the negligent; but to the rest will afford such Strengthening Grace, as may enable them to overcome the Powers of Darkness, and gain that immortal Prize, the Crown of Glory which he has laid up for all them, who shall fight a good Fight, and finish their Course, by continuing faithful to the End.

(c) Quare si duodecimus annus non expectandus videatur, usque ad septimum certe annum differre, maxime convenit. Catechism. ad Parochos. Cap. de Confirmatione.

(d) See the Interrogation and Answer in the Office of Confirmation.

Having thus explain'd to you at large the Nature of *Confirmation*, told you who only has Authority to *confirm*, set down the *Benefits* of it, and hinted at the Qualifications of such as are desirous of them.

Give me leave, before I dismiss you, to present you in *Miniature*, with an exact Representation of the whole, according to the exactest Model of the Excellent *Erasmus* : Who, in his Wishes for a more useful *Confirmation* than that in the Church of *Rome*, many Years ago, seems methinks prophetically as it were, to describe what we shall see perform'd here this afternoon : His Words are to this Purpose, in his larger Preface to his Annotations (e) on the New Testament : You shall see, saith he now, Comedies acted in some Churches (meaning those under the Papal Jurisdiction) of the Resurrection of *Christ*, of his Ascension to Heaven, of his sending the *Holy Ghost*, and the like : But how magnificent would this Spectacle be, To hear the Voice of many Youths dedicating themselves to *Jesus Christ* ? of many Striplings taking their Oath of Allegiance to him at the Hands of the Bishop ? To see these new Christians, that carry their General's Mark in their Foreheads, which they received at the sacred Laver, renouncing the World which all lies in Wickedness, abjuring and hissing at the Devil, with all his Poms, Pleasures and Works ; and to hear the Voice of the rest of the Multitude applauding and wishing well to these young Soldiers of *Christ*.

And let us, who have been already *confirm'd* so heartily wish well to them all, that we may at the same time look well to our selves, who are every one of us equally concern'd in the Business of the Day : Our Church having appointed *Confirmation* as well as *Baptism*, to be administered *Publickly*, that her several Members, may have frequent opportunities of being put in mind of those *Vows*, which God knows, the best of us are too prone to forget.

That we may then all of us improve this favourable one to our great Advantage, Let me conclude the whole Discourse, with a Word of Advice to every one of you here present. As well to you who are already confirmed, as you who shall be by and by, in the incomparable Exhortation of the Greek Church to her Catechumens, when they promise to become Christians. * *The Bonds are now seal'd, and Christ has receiv'd them, who is in Heaven : Mind your Promises, and fulfil your Engagement, which will be openly produc'd at the Day of Judgment. — Take ye heed ye blasph not at Christ's dreadful Tribunal where all the Powers of Heaven tremble, and all Mankind stands to be judg'd : Where the Devil*

(e) *Aguntur nunc in Templis quibusdam Comedia de Christo resurrexente, &c. Erasmus. Roterodam. Pio Læf.*

* τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐπληρώθη, ὁ δεσπότης αὐτὸς ἐν ἔργοις κατέχει ; βλέπετε τοὺς συνθηκὰς, φυλάξατε, &c. Ἀποστολῆς facta a Patriarchâ congregatis Catecumenis in Euchol. Græcorum Edit. Genæ. p. 342.

will be present to accuse you, *for thy Lord, this Wretch in word renounces*
me at thy Altar, before the Bishop, thy Ministers, and the whole
Congregation, but in Deed will say, I renounce thee: Then Angels shall sigh, and
Holy Men bewail your Misery: But Father nor Mother cannot help you,
Brothers and Friends will not save you, but every Man shall be naked and
assistate; Consider therefore, and provide for your own Safeties in this
Life, that ye may be all happy in the Next.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

To whom with the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity, and
Unity in Trinity, be ascribed and given by the whole World, all
possible Adoration, Honour and Glory.

As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World
without End. Amen.

SERMONS Publish'd by the Reverend Mr. Stubbs.

OF Publick Baptism, Preach'd before the *Lord*
Mayor; Of Occasional Communion; Of the Hopes
of a *Resurrection*, and the Abuse of Funeral Sermons;
On the 29th of *May*; On the 5th of *November*, before
the *Lord Mayor*; Of Religious Loyalty and Religious
Charity, on Board the Royal *ANNE*; Of God's Do-
minion over the Seas, and the Seamen's Duty, on Board
the *Royal Sovereign*; Of Peace upon Earth, as the Gift of
God, and Good-Will to one another; the Duty of *Mans*,
at the Royal Hospital in *Greenwich*.

6 JY 53

[E N I S]